

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes
January 16, 2008**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
J.R McCollister	Public Member
Chuck Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Kenneth Baldwin	Forest Guild
Tracy Schohr	California Cattlemen's Association
Tacy Currey	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Justin Oldfield	California Cattlemen's Association
Steve Schoenig	Department of Fish & Game

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. Introductions of all present were made. Jeff Stephens informed the RMAC that a quorum was not present in regards to the committee taking any actions by vote of the membership. All items agreed to by the members present would have to be brought before a quorum of RMAC at a later public meeting.

Item 3, Review of the November 2007 Minutes:

Members present agreed to accept the minutes as written with corrections. A motion to accept the minutes was deferred until a quorum of RMAC members is available to act.

**Item 4, Management Plan or Guide for Oak Woodland Preserves in Placer County:
Continued Discussion from the November 2007 Meeting:**

RMAC agreed that it would be appropriate to submit comments to Richard Harris on the Guide, and that comments should be considered at the March meeting when sufficient members are present to take action. Chuck Pritchard stated he would circulate the Guide to the UC Cooperative Extension Specialist in his area and invite comment. RMAC agreed that electronic comments should be submitted to Jeff Stephens by February 8th.

Mel Thompson asked for clarification on whether RMAC was being asked to comment on the complete Oak Management Plan for Placer County. Jeff Stephens agreed to send an

email to Richard Harris for clarification on the documents for which he is asking comment and report back to RMAC as soon as possible. Ken Zimmerman indicated that once comments are back from Richard Harris he may amend the instruction to RMAC and then push the deadline for input to Richard Harris back. Jeff Stephens confirmed that he would obtain electronic copy of the Guide for Placer County and circulate to RMAC.

Item 5. A Work Plan for further development of the Draft Paper, *Integrating Natural Resource Management in California with Resource Conservation Investments*:

Ken Zimmerman began discussion by referring to the work plan he develop and the bullet points that provide Board instruction. Mr. Zimmerman stated there is a need to draft a letter to the Policy Committee asking them to clarify the direction and content expected of RMAC. However, RMAC must first meet with a quorum to make that determination. He then moved to questions in the Work Plan presented below. *(Bullet points have been replaced with numbers 1-11 in order to better reference the questions in the minutes.)*

Ken Zimmerman explained that the intent of # 1 is to pose the question: Since RMAC has no authority to determine how control of land is established by the state then is it of any relevance to RMAC if it is by fee title or conservation easement?

Scott Carnegie and Mel Thompson turned focus to # 7. Mr. Carnegie posed the question as to whether it is RMAC's intent to provide for the management of existing properties acquired by the State, or is it to determine the manner by which future acquisitions occur. Chuck Pritchard commented that in his opinion previous discussion focused on why properties are being acquired. In other words RMAC was not focusing on opposition to purchasing, but rather, having valid reasons for purchase. And, if there is a reason for purchase are the management funds in place to support the purchase.

JR McCollister asked if the Resources Agency currently has any master document which lays out a plan for acquisition. Steve Schoenig commented that in his opinion no such plan exists; however, there is program called the "Great Places Initiative" which is focused on land acquisition. In addition he just attended a meeting within Department of Fish Game that included personnel involved with land acquisitions with the intent of developing Department wide priorities for acquiring land, both long term and short term. Mr. Schoenig volunteered to find out more about these items if requested.

Ken Zimmerman brought discussion back to # 7 focusing on the development of a "strategic plan" as the objective of the paper. Mel Thompson stated that his original understanding of why RMAC is developing the paper is expressed in # 8; Management plans do not exist on many publicly acquired properties nor is there a statewide plan guiding acquisition, and RMAC is recommending management as part of acquisition. Keep the focus on a making a recommendation for development of a statewide plan for acquisition, not on actually developing the plan.

Scott Carnegie commented on how large of task RMAC is willing to accept. Perhaps it is better to focus on the need for management rather than addressing acquisition as well.

Tacy Currey commented that DFG has the start of a map that shows where all State acquisitions are located including whether they have management plans if it is a DFG property. Clancy Dutra stated that a list of properties owned by the state would be huge

based on his experience in a similar exercise with just Siskiyou County as a County Supervisor.

Ken Zimmerman posed the question if the following statement captures the goal for developing the paper: *"To facilitate discussions among various interest groups and deliver a strategic plan for the stewardship of the state's natural resource."* He recommended removing the word "strategic" due to opposition from input received by stakeholders previously. Subsequent discussion on the part of Mel Thompson with contribution from Chuck Pritchard focused on whether the RMAC should be addressing private easements on private property. Ken Zimmerman agreed with Mel Thompson that this is not the intent of the RMAC paper. Discussion moved to the reasons for the existence of organizations mentioned by Chuck Pritchard, such as the Rangeland Trust; an organization founded with the intent of securing the trust of landowners to manage property with the landowners objectives in mind in combination with conservation objectives. Ken Zimmerman followed this by stating that his objective by creating a plan for statewide acquisition is to lay the ground rules for acquisition so that entities have a methodology that addresses stakeholder interests and objectives including the landowner.

Ken Zimmerman returned the RMAC to the goal statement as previously stated and asked the RMAC members present if they agree with it as stated. The members present agreed and Mr. Zimmerman stated he will circulate it to the remainder of RMAC for consideration.

Ken Zimmerman then directed discussion to the second part of bullet point #7, "Does RMAC support the model CRCC is using on private rangelands in the central valley?" Chuck Pritchard stated that at this point in time it is one of the best models that we have. Mel Thompson called for explaining how the model would be used. Ken Zimmerman stated he wishes to focus on the cooperative relationship that exists between private and public entities as demonstrated by the CCRC model. An alternative would be to just focus on success stories such as Yolo Bypass without specific mentioning of the CCRC.

Ken Zimmerman addressed questions 1-4 in order and summarized his conclusions as to whether there was agreement on the part of RMAC members present. Subsequent comment is provided below as well.

1. # 1 the conclusion is "yes."
2. # 2 the conclusion is "no;"
3. # 3 the conclusion is "yes." Mel Thompson reinforced his point that there needs to be discussion in the paper that is specific to RMAC's recommendation regarding # 3. This would include the use of easements in order to save ranches. Tracy Schohr supported this conclusion citing the advantages of easements including the maintenance of land in private ownership, keeping the land on the tax roles, and maintain working landscapes.
4. # 4: Clancy Dutra stated that one must consider the locked gate which excludes public balanced against the impact of public access to the land. Chuck Pritchard stated that access may be limited versus unlimited. Mr. Dutra stated that he can agree to public access provided limitations are addressed in the management plan. RMAC members agreed to this approach; the response to the question is "yes," and RMAC members were in agreement to the second sentence found in # 4.

Questions for RMAC taken from the Work Plan developed by Ken Zimmerman:

1. *Is it RMAC's position that we have nothing to say about the spending of conservation bond dollars?*
2. *Is it fiscally responsible for the state to purchase lands without having the resources to develop management plans and provide stewardship for these lands?*
3. *What is RMAC's position on Conservation Easements? Are Conservation Easements preferred over fee title acquisition when the state is using bond money?*
4. *If the state is acquiring fee title property should it not also include public access? State liability associated with public access would require some level of planning, management, and maintenance by the trustee agency or department.*
5. *What is the states goal in the use of bond monies: keeping large tracts of land open, recreation, water resources, habitat, etc. Request from the Resources Agency a summary of their long term conservation investment program.*
6. *What is RMAC's goal for the paper: answer the questions from the BOF, fiscal responsibility for investments by state agencies and departments, proper stewardship of rangeland resources*
7. *Reasoning for developing this paper is to facilitate discussions among various interest groups and deliver a strategic plan for the stewardship of the state's natural resource: Does RMAC support the model CRCC is using on private rangelands in the central valley? Can this model applied on state owned lands?*
8. *Integrate the current departmental natural resource management of state owned lands and conservation investments into a sustainable Cooperative Stewardship Management Plan that focuses on broad resource objectives: healthy watersheds, productive rangelands with diverse habitat, hazardous fuels reduction, etc.: is this the intended goal for paper?*
9. *Management plans must be developed at the local level.*
10. *Encourage private/public partnerships to manage the resources to maintain or enhance the resource objectives identified.*
11. *Does the current title of this paper capture RMAC's purpose?*

Ken Zimmerman directed attention to the instruction from the Board found under the section "Policy Committee" on the first page of the Work Plan. Scott Carnegie noted that if

the paper is short enough an Executive Summary would not be necessary. Ken Zimmerman recommended using the Policy Committee directives, and the other questions to RMAC discussed above to rework the paper into a form that satisfies the mission statement. Scott Carnegie commented that a new title, format, and wording are in order. Clancy Dutra asked for a corrected outline/Work Plan. Ken Zimmerman agreed to produce a new version.

Jeff Stephens provided input stating that RMAC may wish to state clearly in its recommendation to the Board that agencies and departments are encouraged to adopt policies and directives stating that no land is acquired unless funding for management and a management plan are included as part of acquisition. RMAC members agreed. JR McCollister stated that he had always believed this to be a primary statement of the paper.

Item 8. Agency and Association Reports:

Department of Fish & Game, Steve Schoenig Reporting:

Steve Schoenig has taken a new position with the Department of Fish & Game (DFG) and left his position with California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA). He now works with the Biogeographic Data Branch of DFG, a section analogous to the Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) with CAL FIRE. He is responsible for the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) and the Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS). Both are used to assess environmental impact to wildlife for projects under CEQA by agencies.

Steve Schoenig stated there is not a data base within DFG that addresses non-native plant species. His boss has asked that he pursue development of this database. Ken Zimmerman made the point that non-native needs definition to account for species that are now accepted on the landscape. The focus would be on those having economic impact. Mr. Schoenig agreed.

Steve Schoenig passed out a DFG publication, "The Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program." He described it as a very fine grain system for identifying vegetation.

Chuck Pritchard asked if anyone in his organization is looking into which vegetation types contribute best to carbon sequestration. Mr. Schoenig did not know but felt that many scientists with various organizations are probably studying the impact of vegetation on carbon sequestration; Steve Schaffer (sp) with DFG being one. Justin Oldfield stated that the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is generating information and doing research on carbon sequestration with the intent of benefiting landowners. They also are gathering information on the effects of grazing on carbon sequestration.

Steve Schoenig stated Kevin Hunting and Karri Lewis are both very active in land acquisition with DFG if RMAC seeks a contact.

CDFA has identified someone to take over the Weed Management Area Program. Steve Schoenig encouraged RMAC to stay in contact with CDFA and promote the Weed Management Program. Weeds seem to be overshadowed by insects. He also cautioned that CCA and the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) need to stay proactive with CDFA and the weed program in order to maintain it. He advised that a formal request to CDFA for an RMAC representative may be required.

Kenneth Baldwin asked if the new vegetation classification system mentioned previously will replace WHR Types. Steve Schoenig stated that each WHR type will receive a vegetation classification from the new system, so the two will be integrated to that extent.

Item 6, Update: An invitation to Thomas M. Bonnicksen to address wildland fire and fuels management:

Jeff Stephens reported that he has been in contact with Don Zea with the California Forest Products Commission. Mr. Zea is willing to assist RMAC in arranging for Mr. Bonnicksen to appear at a RMAC meeting or other venue. Mr. Zea has not responded so details on availability are uncertain. Chuck Pritchard explained the potential subject matter as being the need for fuels management and reintroducing fire to maintain safer landscapes. Ken Zimmerman stated that the message should be better defined and then approach George Gentry with the possibility of the Board attending or assisting with a presentation.

Item 7, California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan and Tier 1 Compliance:

Chuck Pritchard referred to a memo written by Donald J. Funk with the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD expressing concerns with the Regional Water Boards moving from Tier 1 (Voluntary Compliance) to Tiers 2&3 that involve non point source regulation for compliance. Mr. Pritchard stated that he believes the memo is valid. Ken Zimmerman asked if there is something specific being asked of RMAC. Chuck Pritchard stated that discussion with the State and Regional Boards would be appropriate. Ken Zimmerman called for the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) as well as other stakeholders represented by RMAC to take a position on the issues, before any action by RMAC. Justin Oldfield stated that his observation thus far with the Central Coast Regional Board, and others that are contemplating the elimination of Tier 1, is that they perceive Tier 1 not be an option any longer, and the Regional Boards believes it to be their legal obligation to take action, regulatory or otherwise, to address non point source pollution from rangelands. He stated that CCA does not agree with the position that Tier 1 is not available.

Tracy Schohr stated that the motive behind elimination of voluntary compliance is not based in any directive received from the State Board for Water Quality. The motivation to eliminate Tier 1 originates from other factors specific to each Water Quality Region, such as E. coli on the Central Coast. Justin Oldfield stated that CCA is working with the Central Coast Board seeking a non-regulatory solution. Jeff Stephens asked if there is an issue with Tier1 not being properly implemented or ranchers not participating. Justin Oldfield stated that it is largely a case of the program not being supported by the state, and that training courses for ranchers are planned in a few locations but more support from the State is needed. He further stated that a significant issue is how to engage the many hobby farmers out there with small operations, such equestrian centers, in non-point source compliance. A case needs to be made to the Regional Boards to address the small hobby farmer and support the larger operations that are participating in Tier 1.

Clancy Dutra cited his previous experience with the short course for Tier 1 compliance and the fact that it was a significant time commitment (several days) that is probably justified for the large landowners. However, a shorter version is needed that is tailored

for the small ranchet, and ranchet landowners need to be convinced that non point source pollution control is needed.

Ken Zimmerman asked Chuck Pritchard what he wishes from RMAC regarding the memo from Mr. Funk. Chuck Pritchard stated that his primary objective today was to inform RMAC of the situation. Mr. Zimmerman recommended that Mr. Funk be provided with the information generated by previous meetings of RMAC on the subject, and then after his review provide a more specific request of RMAC.

Justin Oldfield pointed out that the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board has named RMAC as a clearing house for information within their Basin Plan. This may be an opportunity for RMAC to provide direct input. Mr. Oldfield agreed to keep RMAC apprised with the Central Coast situation, and advise RMAC on how best to engage the Regional Board.

Item 8, Agency and Association Reports:

California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Tracy Schohr and Justin Oldfield Reporting:

Justin Oldfield mentioned AB 32 and the concerns that CCA has regarding potential impacts to industry from government actions that pertain to global warming. CCA is working to minimize those impacts.

CCA has been following the recent overturning of proposed grazing decisions on the part of federal land management agencies. Environmental groups responsible for these actions are turning their attention to California.

Tracy Schohr reported that the Annual Meeting of the California Rangeland Coalition meets the 22nd. Attendance is expected to exceed 175 people. A good cross section of agencies and ranchers will attend.

Outreach to agencies by the Coalition is a high priority. Defenders of Wildlife are hiring a staff person to support the Coalition much like Tracy Schohr's position with the CCA.

Justin Oldfield stated that the North Coast is pursuing sediment impaired water bodies as directed by the Regional Board as part of the TMDL process. Also, CCA is encouraging the Regional Boards to consider other sources of pollution than ranching regarding non point source pollution. Tamales Bay was cited as an example.

CCA continues to work with Jay Chamberlin with the Resources Agencies to explore returning managed grazing to state lands. They have made recommendations for candidate properties and how to select a lessee. DFG lands have been the focus; however, Parks is also being discussed.

Item 9 Focus Group Reports:

Rangeland Focus Group, Chuck Pritchard Reporting:

Mr. Pritchard covered the following items:

The presentation by George Work on the use of cattle for vegetation control was reviewed emphasizing the missed opportunity for the use of livestock by fire control agencies.

He reviewed the presentation by Larry Ford describing the issues raised by the letter from RMAC to the Cal-Pac Society of Range Management Certification Panel. These include continuing education credits, the design of test questions, the revision of CCR 1561 (c) and the opportunity for RMAC to impact the content. He reviewed discussion on the history of the CRM program including the current requirements to take the exam. This includes the issue of experience versus education as a qualifying factor to take the exam. Mr. Ford advised that RMAC should wait until after the Panel meets March 12 before RMAC takes any further action.

Mr. Pritchard reviewed comments by Ron Eng and the letter to CDFA on the spread of invasive weeds from contamination equipment. Mr. Eng confirmed that it is appropriate to address the letter to Larry Bezark with CDFA.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Jeff Stephens Reporting:

Jeff Stephens stated that the Department is in the process of going through budget reduction scenarios for next fiscal year due to the statewide deficit of about \$14 billion. Regarding the Vegetation Management Program (VMP), the first proposal for consideration was to eliminate the program. This was reconsidered and the current exercise is for all programs in Resource Management to take a 10% cut. The net result for VMP is a proposed reduction in funding to do work.

Internal Department comment for the Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report is complete. The task is to compile that comment and submit to the Board and the Department's Management for review prior to going back to the Contractor.

Item 10, New and Unfinished Business:

Ken Zimmerman reported that Janet Cobb has asked RMAC to agendize her for a presentation on the Climate Action Committee and the conversion of oak woodlands to other uses and appropriate mitigation.

Mel Thompson stated that at the last RMAC meeting Henry Giacomini stated he intends to resign from RMAC and that another member be considered to replace him as the Water Focus Group Chairman until such time that Farm Bureau provides another nominee. He asked if there is an agreement with Farm Bureau that the Water Focus Group Chairman be from the Farm Bureau. Ken Zimmerman stated no, that was not the intended meaning of Mr. Giacomini's comment. JR McCollister reminded the RMAC that Clancy Dutra was mentioned as an appropriate replacement for Henry Giacomini.

Jeff Stephens will write a letter to CDFA to request a replacement for Steve Schoenig as the RMAC contact.

Item 11, Public Comment:

NONE

Adjourn

Tasks:

1. Submit comments on the Placer County Plan or Guide for Oak Woodland Preserves to Jeff Stephens by February 8th.
2. Jeff Stephens will write a letter to CDFA to request a replacement for Steve Schoenig as the RMAC contact.